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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

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R 031751Z OCT 73
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4485
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, UK
SUBJECT: WILSON REJECTS COALITION WITH LIBERALS
REF: LONDON 11123

1. IN THE LEADER'S TRADITIONAL INSPIRATIONAL SPEECH TO THE LABOR PARTY'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE, HAROLD WILSON TODAY SERVED NOTICE UNEQUIVOCALLY AND CATEGORICALLY THAT LABOR WILL NOT ENTER INTO ANY COALITION OR POLITICAL ALLIANCE OF ANY KIND WITH THE LIBERAL PARTY. HE PLEDGED THERE WOULD BE "NO UNDERSTANDING, NO DEAL, NO ARRANGEMENT, NO FIX" NOR ANY SECRET DEAL OR SECRET DISCUSSIONS.
2. HE ALSO RULED OUT ANY ARRANGEMENT, WHEREBY A MINORITY LABOR GOVERNMENT MIGHT WATER DOWN ITS PROGRAM
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TO GAIN TACIT LIBERAL SUPPORT. A FUTURE LABOR GOVERN-

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MENT WILL PUSH ITS POLICIES BOLDLY, HE ASSERTED, AND IF THWARTED BY LIBERALS HOLDING A BALANCE OF POWER, SEEK A NEW MANDATE FROM THE ELECTORATE.

3. IN CONCLUSION WILSON ASSERTED THAT THE ONLY COALITION POSSIBLE WAS A COALITION OF "THE TWO TORY PARTIES" -- THE CONSERVATIVES AND THE LIBERALS -- AND THAT, THEREFORE, A VOTE FOR THE LIBERALS WOULD BE A VOTE FOR A CONSERVATIVE-DOMINATED COALITION. COMMENT: WILSON'S UNCOMPROMISING LANGUAGE IS A CLEAR MEASURE OF LABOR'S CONCERN OVER THE LIBERAL REVIVAL. UNTIL RECENTLY IT WAS LABOR'S POLICY TO IGNORE THE LIBERALS TOTALLY. BY LABELING LIBERALS AS TORIES WILSON HOPES TO FORESTALL THE DEFECTION OF TRADITIONAL LABOR VOTERS WHO WOULD NEVER VOTE CONSERVATIVE BUT MIGHT OPT FOR THE LIBERALS AS A CENTRIST PARTY. WHETHER WILSON HOLDS TO HIS FIRM RESOLVE REMAINS TO BE SEEN, BUT IN OPENING HIS PARTY'S CAMPAIGN FOR THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION, IT WAS ONLY NATURAL THAT HE SHOULD TRY TO NIP IN THE BUD THE ELECTORALLY DAMAGING SPECULATION THAT HE MIGHT EVER COME TO TERMS WITH THE LIBERALS.

4. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, WILSON'S REMARKS ALSO POINT UP THE LIMITATIONS INHERENT IN ANY LIBERAL STRATEGY AIMED AT SECURING THE BALANCE OF POWER (REFTEL). AS MANY LIBERALS ARE AWARE IT IS ENTIRELY CONCEIVABLE THAT LABOR (OR THE CONSERVATIVES) MIGHT FORM A MINORITY GOVERNMENT, REJECT COALITION WITH THE LIBERALS AND DEFY THE LIBERALS TO BRING IT DOWN, SAFE IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THE HARD PRESSED LIBERAL PARTY ORGANIZATION WOULD SCARCELY WELCOME HAVING TO FIGHT A GENERAL ELECTION ALL OVER AGAIN.

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